

# What you should know about lead in cinnamon applesauce pouches?

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Every so often, parents hear scary news that lead or other metals have been found in baby foods made with rice, fruit or vegetables. Recently,

the Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned people not to eat certain brands of cinnamon applesauce pouches because they had lead in them.

As of Nov. 22, at least 52 toddlers in several states have had high blood [lead](#) levels linked to the recalled applesauce and apple puree pouches, according to the FDA.

Right now, the FDA suspects that cinnamon used in the products may be the source of lead. A cinnamon applesauce product sample that was tested by the FDA had 200 times more lead than the FDA allows in food. The source of the cinnamon is under investigation and the FDA is screening shipments of cinnamon from outside the U.S. for lead.

## **What should I do if my child ate the recalled applesauce?**

The most important step is to stop your child from getting any more exposure to lead. If you have any of the recalled pouches, throw them away. If your child has eaten recalled fruit pouch, talk to your child's pediatrician or nurse about getting a blood test for lead. Your regional poison control center (800-222-1222) or Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit can also help.

Metals like lead, arsenic and mercury are found on the earth and get on plants through pollution in the air or water. Sometimes, spices or vitamins added to foods may be contaminated by lead and these need careful testing by food companies. Lead may also be part of metal tanks used to make baby food.

Lead is a poison that acts like a burglar. The ways it enters our homes can be sneaky. It lurks around and can try to rob children of their full

potential.

The only way to find lead in children is with a [blood test](#). Most children with high lead levels won't look sick, but even small amounts can be harmful to the brain and make it harder for kids to learn or to control their behavior. Larger amounts of lead can lead to headache, irritability, constipation, crampy stomachaches or other problems. Severe lead poisoning can cause seizures or coma. When [lead poisoning](#) is severe, doctors may recommend medicine to lower a child's blood lead levels.

Dust from lead house paint remains the biggest lead hazard in the United States. We stopped using lead in house paint after 1978, so older homes pose a risk.

The U.S. tries to watch food and toys to make sure they're safe from lead—that's how it was found in the recalled applesauce pouches. It is also commonly found in imported spices, candies, cosmetics or nutritional supplements.

Soil may contain lead from old gasoline and industrial sources. It also lurks in service lines carrying water to homes and lead solder used in plumbing. Some jobs, like ship or bridge painting, metal recycling or construction can lead to lead exposure. Lead may be found in antique woodwork or in ceramic glazes. Some hobbies, like going to gun shooting ranges or making stained glass, may have lead hazards, too.

The most important "treatment" for your child is to prevent further exposure to lead. Parents can help their children by giving them a good healthy diet with plenty of calcium and iron, helping them get good sleep, and by "exercising" their brains through reading and puzzles.

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